

Temporary and Portable Sign Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated 9/16/14)

The City of Sherwood regulates the size, location and numbers of signs permitted throughout the city to avoid visual clutter and maintain the aesthetics that Sherwood values and ensure vehicle and pedestrian safety. While it is the intent that the Code be clear and understandable, it is recognized that there are elements that may still cause some confusion. The purpose of this hand out is to address some of the more frequent questions that are raised regarding temporary and portable signs. Please refer to Sherwood Municipal Code 16.102 for the full code.

A few “basics”:

- No sign of ANY type is permitted in the right of way between 6:00 PM on Sunday to 6:00 AM on Friday. Exceptions:
 - Public notice signs required by law
 - Federal, state and other flags (with size restrictions)
 - Signs approved as part of a Special Event Permit
 - A-Frame signs in Old Town with a business license
 - Public necessity signs such as safety and instructional signs
- Between 6:00 AM on Friday to 6:00 PM on Sunday, ONLY portable signs 18 inches X 24 inches or smaller or A-Frame signs no taller than 4 feet and no greater than 7 square feet are permitted in the right of way
 - If it is larger than the dimensions noted, it is ***not allowed in the right of way***
- On private property, temporary signs (see definition; they are different from portable signs) are permitted with limitations on size and number depending on the zone
- On private property, portable signs are permitted as specified:
 - Residential: up to 4 portable signs are permitted on residentially zoned property
 - Commercial or Industrial: 1 portable sign per business
 - Institution/Public property: one portable sign every 50 feet along street frontage

Answers to common questions:

1. **Is a permit required?** No, a permit is not required for a temporary sign or a portable sign. Please note that a permit IS required for a banner sign.
2. **What is the difference between a temporary and a portable sign?** While often used interchangeably in conversation, a temporary sign is very different from a portable sign in how they are defined and regulated in the City of Sherwood.

Temporary Signs are firmly affixed to a temporary structure that is placed into the ground and designed to be temporary. Characteristics of a temporary sign include signs constructed of a rigid material attached to wood or metal posts which do not require permanent footings. Examples of temporary signs include, but are not limited to, residential and commercial real estate signs.

There are 2 types of portable signs:

A Portable **A-Frame Sign** is a double-faced portable sign with an A-shaped frame, no greater than four (4) feet in height and seven (7) square feet per sign face, composed of two (2) sign boards attached at the top and separated at the bottom, and not supported by a structure in the ground.

A standard **Portable Sign** is a small movable sign no greater than twenty-four (24) inches in height and a sign face no larger than eighteen (18) inches by twenty-four (24) inches in size used for a temporary period of time. Portable signs include stand-alone signs, not attached to a building or any other permanent structure. Examples include political signs, real estate open house signs, and other similar signage.

3. **How many temporary signs can I put up on my property? How large can they be?** A temporary sign is a sign that is firmly affixed to a temporary structure (such as a post) such as a “for sale” or “for lease” sign. The size depends on the zoning of the property it is placed on.

Zoning	Max height	Max size (per sign face)	Construction limitations
VLDR, LDR and MDRL	6 feet	6 square feet	Wood or vinyl Colonial post style (residential “for sale sign)
MDRH and HDR	8 ½ feet	32 square feet per side	Firmly affixed to a temporary structure that is placed in the ground and designed to be temporary (such as a post)
Commercial zones	8 ½ feet	32 square feet per side	
Industrial zones	8 ½ feet	32 square feet per side	
Institutional and Public zones	8 ½ feet	32 square feet per side	

Only 1 temporary sign is permitted per lot unless the property has more than one street frontage or more than 300 feet of frontage; in which case 2 temporary signs are permitted at least 50 feet apart

4. **How many portable signs can I place on my property? How large can they be?** This depends on the zoning of the property. You may have up to 4 signs on residentially zoned properties and 1 per business in commercially or industrially zoned properties. A-Frame signs may be 4 feet high and no more than 7 square feet per sign face. Any other portable sign may be no more than 24 inches high and 18 inches wide.
5. **Can I place a temporary sign in the right of way?** No. A Temporary sign is firmly affixed to a temporary structure that is placed into the ground and is generally permitted to be larger than a portable sign. These signs are permitted on private property only and limited in number and size depending on the zone they are placed in.
6. **Can I place a portable sign in the right of way?** Yes with limitations. See questions below
7. **Can I place portable signs on public (City) property, outside of the right of way?** No. Signs are not permitted in public parks, publicly owned lots, public buildings, etc. Portable signs may be located in the right of way adjacent to any of those locations

8. **Can I place a portable sign on School property?** Since the school district property is separate from City property, that is up to the School District to permit and enforce. It is the City's understanding that the School District will not permit portable signs for elections on their property. Please contact the District Facilities Manager for questions about enforcement on the school grounds. Signs in the right of way, including in front of school property, is permitted by code on Friday from 6:00 AM to Sunday at 6:00 PM. Signs should be spaced no less than 25 feet apart.
9. **How do I know where the right of way is?** Generally, the right of way ends about 1 foot beyond the sidewalk, regardless of whether there is a planter strip or not. If there is no sidewalk, look for other clues such as utility poles, fence lines or location of sidewalk on nearby properties. A good rule of thumb to determine the line between right of way and private property, when no sidewalk exists, is to measure 11 feet from the face of curb (5-foot planter strip, 5-foot sidewalk, 1-foot clear). If you are unsure, ask the Planning Department (503.925.2308) for assistance and/or contact the property owner adjacent to the area in question.
10. **Portable signs are not permitted to “obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic”; what does this mean?** Signs in the median “obstruct vehicular traffic” by blocking a driver's view of oncoming traffic. They can also obstruct traffic less directly by distracting a driver's attention from the road. A sign in the middle of a traffic circle raises the same concern. For these reasons, the City Engineer and Police have concluded that signs may not be placed in a median or in the middle of or within 50 feet of a traffic circle. See sketch.
11. **Are signs permitted on Pacific Highway and Tualatin-Sherwood Road?** Washington County and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) do not permit signs in their right of way and the Development Code (16.102.020.A.1 and 2) specifically prohibits temporary and portable signs in these rights of way. Washington County right of way includes: Tualatin-Sherwood Road, Elwert Road, Roy Rogers and Edy Road. ODOT right of way includes Highway 99W. The City will enforce any signs in any right of way within the City limits, as time and resources allow, during the prohibition periods.
12. **What if signs are located in the right of way during the permissible time frames (Friday from 6:00 AM to Sunday at 6:00 PM) but are in a location that is not allowed or is larger than permitted?** While the sign complies with the timing requirement, it still violates the size and location requirements and would be removed for those reasons.
13. **What are prohibited sign locations?** Portable signs must be free-standing and may not be attached to any structure or vegetation such as utility poles, traffic signs, street signs or trees. For traffic safety reasons, portable signs may not be located within 50 feet of round-about or within center medians of roads.
14. **What if someone places a portable sign in the right of way in front of my property and I don't want it there?** Under the City code, a property owner is responsible for maintaining the right-of-way in front of the property and, for that reason, may remove a sign that was placed

there without the owner's consent. Conversely, the owner may not remove a sign that is not adjacent to the owner's property. Also, we encourage property owner's not to destroy or deface a sign that is removed from the property, but instead to hold on to the sign long enough for someone to come and collect it. (This minimizes any concern that a property owner might have a complaint filed against them for destroying signs.

15. The Sign Code requires portable signs to be spaced 25 feet apart but there are lots of signs closer than that at intersections? Are you enforcing this? This is easier to enforce on private property because we can contact the owner. In the right of way, unless we actually see someone place a sign close to another sign we cannot determine which sign was placed first (legally) and which sign was placed later. Rather than penalizing everyone by removing all of the signs, we will err on the side of caution and not remove signs in the right-of-way that are closer than 25 feet together unless it is absolutely clear which was placed second. In any event, if the signs are still there after 6:00 pm on Sunday, all of them will be removed.

16. Can I attach a sign to the side of my house? This would be considered a wall sign. A wall sign is not permitted in residential zones other than on public/semi-public uses such as churches, schools, and public buildings. Wall signs are permitted in commercial and industrial zones. Any wall sign must obtain a building permit and must comply with the dimensional standards in the code. Banner signs are permitted in residential zones but a permit must be obtained. Please note that no sign (may be attached to a structure such as a fence, retaining wall, etc.

17. What are the requirements for a banner sign? Banner signs are permitted by permit only (obtained through the Planning Department) and are valid for 30 days. Only 3 banner permits are permitted on the same property per calendar year. Banner signs may not exceed 32 square feet and may not be attached to a fence, retaining wall, building roof, vehicle, or trailer.

18. What if I see a sign that is not in conformance with the rules?

- If it is in the right of way between Sunday at 6:00 PM and Friday at 6:00 AM, contact the Police "non-emergency" number at (503) 629-0111. Signs will be removed as time and resources allow.
- If it is in the right of way between Friday 6:00 AM and Sunday 6:00 PM (the permitted timeframe for signs in the right of way) but is in a prohibited location or is larger than permitted, thus causing a traffic safety hazard, contact the Police "non-emergency" number at (503) 629-0111. Signs will be removed as time and resources allow.
- If it is on private property, contact Code Compliance officer Bill Collins 503-925-7106, who will determine if there is a violation and will follow the enforcement process for signs on private property.

Please note: moving, removing or vandalizing signs on private property is considered trespassing and is criminal. Report illegal signs to code compliance.

Enforcement:

16.102.060 outlines the enforcement process for temporary or portable signs on private property.

For signs in the right of way, 16.102.040.A.5.b states that “***signs shall not create a traffic safety or maintenance problem, and the City may remove and dispose of any signs that constitute a problem.***” A sign in the right of way is required to be picked up by 6:00 PM on Sundays and it is the responsibility of the person posting the sign to remove it (16.102.020.G). . The City will treat any sign that remains in the right-of-way after 6:00 PM on Sunday and before 6:00 AM on Friday as refuse or litter and, therefore, a “maintenance problem.” These signs will be picked up. Finally, a sign that is located within 50 feet of a round-about or other prohibited location, or exceeds the size limits (which implicates aesthetic as well as safety concerns), is considered to be a “traffic safety” problem even during permitted time periods and for that reason will be removed and may be disposed of. As a courtesy, the City will return signs to a sign owner, upon request and in person on Mondays between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. The City will dispose of a sign that is not collected within 30 days. To determine if a sign has been picked up by code compliance and is in City’s possession, contact Bill Collins at 503-925-7106 or collinsb@sherwoodoregon.gov.